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An Evaluation of the Economic
Assets and Liabilities
of the Valdosta Area

Prepared for the
Valdosta and Lowndes County
Chamber of Commerce
Valdosta, Georgia



by
J. R. Peterson



Engineering Experiment Station
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, Georgia

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FOREWORD

This is the first of a series of reports to be delivered to the Valdosta and Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce in fulfillment of our Contract No. A-355. Its purpose is to provide a preliminary appraisal of Valdosta's assets and liabilities and to indicate the specific steps which need to be taken to insure that the area's potentials will be developed.

This report is therefore intended primarily for internal use. We hope its findings will be put to work immediately to eliminate the Valdosta Area's liabilities. Only if this is done can the area's many assets be fully developed. If action is not taken, much of our research efforts as well as most of the promotional work of the Chamber of Commerce will be wasted.

By the time the final report is delivered in June 1959, we hope to be able to state in our recapitulation first, that many of the liabilities pointed out here have already been eliminated, and second, that an effective action program has been laid out for the elimination of those liabilities which may remain. Combined with information on Valdosta's many assets, these two statements will provide the best of promotional materials.

The first two of a series of specific industry studies, already completed, are being delivered as separate reports. Their aim, like the aim of this report is to contribute in a practical and effective way to the further development of the economy of the Valdosta and Lowndes County area.

Kenneth C. Wagner, Head
Industrial Development Branch

PREFACE

This report covers many topics which have already been discussed with various persons in Valdosta, since we have felt that as information becomes available or is confirmed it should be passed along to the interested people as quickly as possible. By transmitting facts or in making recommendations without waiting to publish a report, we feel that we can best serve the interests of the people of Valdosta and Lowndes County.

In some cases action could not be taken immediately. In others, the recipient has taken a fact or a suggestion or recommendation and has taken steps which have resulted in considerable progress since the study was undertaken seven months ago. The County Agent, for example, lost no time in investigating the potentials for growing sweet potatoes in the area after we had given him the name of a company interested in purchasing them.

Recommendations have been made verbally to many different persons regarding community development, in particular. To these individuals much of the report may be "old hat." But it is felt that for those with whom the subjects have not been discussed, as well as to provide a printed record for future reference, the report should include these topics. We have therefore attempted to include not only new material, but items already covered verbally or through correspondence.

Not all of the ideas reported here are our own. Many came from persons in Lowndes County. Others grew out of discussions with local residents. The report has not and should not have been based strictly on published statistics, but is based also on information secured from Valdostans as well. We have found that many people in the county had already given some thought to just the subjects we wanted to discuss with them.

This report therefore serves the added purpose of bringing together, in one package, their separate thoughts.

During the course of the study, several products have been suggested as possibilities for manufacture in the Valdosta area. They were tentative suggestions only, however, intended only to make sure that the Chamber of Commerce did not miss any opportunities because the first report was not yet published. After investigation, all remain possibilities for branch plants. However, some would not be recommended as investment opportunities. For some, raw material would not be available in assured quantities; others require too large an investment. Separate reports are being furnished on each product investigated to date. A number of industries will be under study throughout the duration of the analysis. Information will be turned over to the Chamber of Commerce as rapidly as it becomes available.

It is impossible to separate economic data from closely related subject matter. City management affects the economics of the area; urban renewal affects the economics of the area; highway and city planning affect the area's economics. What is more, economics in turn affects all of these and more. Therefore, we have attempted to work very closely with the other organizations who have also been planning for Valdosta's future. This coordination has, we believe, been of value to all. We have received and used information from all of these groups, and we have furnished information and suggestions which have been implemented by them.

To a large extent this analysis cuts across all of the phases outlined in the original research proposal. For example, it is not practical to survey the assets and liabilities without paying considerable attention to Phase V, and even Phase VI. Since the data and analyses are available, they are included in this report so that the information can be used immediately. More detailed analyses of specific sections of the economy will follow in subsequent reports.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report would not have been possible without the efforts and interest of a host of people in Valdosta and Lowndes County. Rather than list the many contributions in detail, we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to each and every individual who provided assistance in the preparation of this report.

Members of the staff of the Industrial Development Branch who made substantial contributions are Mrs. Beaufort Johnson and Mrs. Thera Richter. Both did a considerable amount of data collection and analysis, both in Lowndes County and at our offices in Atlanta.

The bulk of the work of preparing this first report, as well as a great deal of the data collection and analysis, have been the responsibility of Mr. J. R. Peterson.

Kenneth C. Wagner Project Directors
J. R. Peterson

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SUMMARY

There is no doubt that Valdosta will grow. How steadily it grows and its rate of growth depend on the efforts of its citizens. They must make Lowndes County both a more efficient and a more attractive place to live--a better product for the Chamber of Commerce to sell; they should help look for customers (industrialists) and help with the "sales."

This requires a broad-gauged industrial development program--one which includes much more than just the solicitation of industrial prospects. To simplify our presentation we have organized the report under three closely interrelated but analytically distinct headings. In terms of an action program, Valdostans should think of these as the focal points of a three-point program:

1. industrial development,
2. community development,
3. customer development.

Each of these overlaps the other two. But they need to be examined separately in terms of the specific problems which relate to each of the three topics.

Industrial development involves three things: finding out what there is to sell, finding out which industries may want that product and then selling the industry on the product--in this case Lowndes County.

Community development involves improving the product, plus working to keep it a better product than competitors have. In other words, a continuing planning program is essential.

"Customer development" involves attracting people, either industrial prospects or retail customers into your establishments and then making them permanent customers.

The "direct" industrial development program is extremely active. The Chamber of Commerce is working hard to solicit industry; the Industrial Development Branch of the Georgia Tech Engineering Experiment Station has made a survey of the area's assets and liabilities, and is in the process of matching them with the needs of different industries. Two feasibility studies accompany this report. However, all the businessmen should assist with ideas and with leads.

The community development program is stirring. A city manager is to be hired; the urban renewal program is moving; action has been taken toward establishing a city-county planning program; and several businessmen have renovated their establishments.

At present the "customer development" program is oriented toward industry, which would of course be the best customer. However, this program is not restricted to the Chamber of Commerce, nor should the ordinary retail customer be overlooked. New customers should be sought. Lost customers should be resold. It is urgent to gain many more customers if the area is to regain its lost income. Valdosta's population has shown signs of some contraction during the last half of 1957. Furthermore, sales tax receipts have declined for two years straight. These contraction factors to some extent reflect the general recession, but many of the factors involved have no relation to the declining economy as a whole.

A substantial portion of Valdosta's economy was for quite a while supported by construction--construction at Moody Air Force Base, construction of the paper mill, construction of housing for the employees of the new plants. Most of this construction is completed and the construction workers have left for other jobs. Customers have moved away.

Moody Field is reducing its personnel, and this reduction has further reduced the area income. It will continue to do so over the next few years. But these subtractions have a compounding effect. As the customers move away or lose their jobs, the need for clerks and even for stores may disappear; even more customers will be lost to the area.

Valdosta has also been losing customers on the fringe of its market area. For a number of reasons these people are going elsewhere. Other cities with less industrial employment than Valdosta offer commercial attractions Valdosta does not offer: newer, larger, well laid out shopping areas, wide streets to reduce congestion, better parking facilities, better roads, and in some cases wider selections of merchandise. Although until recently the number of Valdosta's customers has been increasing, the distance people will travel to shop in Valdosta has been decreasing. Valdosta is losing the competitive race.

Tourists do not pass through Lowndes County in the volume they pass through other Georgia cities near the Florida border. An analysis of the traffic map shows that Lowndes County highways carry a large volume of traffic. But that it is not through traffic--it is commuter and commercial traffic. The through traffic to Florida passes through the other cities to a large degree. One reason is that many travellers avoid Atlanta on their trips and therefore never get on Highway 41. Others avoid Valdosta because of the bad highway north of town.

In a few years the new interstate highway will undoubtedly funnel a great deal of the Florida traffic back toward Valdosta. It will be Valdosta's problem in the future to attract a substantial portion of the traffic into the town. But that prospect is still a long time off.

Valdosta is in competition with every other city, not only for industry, but for retail dollars as well. For some of the loss Valdosta has suffered recently, particularly construction payrolls, additional industry is the only practical answer. As to the loss of retail dollars, the problem can only be solved by organized action by the city's businessmen. The fringes of Valdosta's market area are retreating toward the city as people who used to shop in Lowndes County decide that Valdosta is the second best city. Since "winner takes all" in this case, second best gets nothing.

Likewise, in industrial development second best still means loss of the prospective plant. Therefore, no matter whether it can be pointed out that many cities do not have nearly so many assets as Valdosta, if one city has more or even just the one critical asset an industry may be lost. And one critical liability, can cost Valdosta an industry.

Recommendations

We therefore (strongly) recommend below a series of specific steps be taken to implement Valdosta and Lowndes County's industrial development program. Unless these recommendations are carried out, the industry studies which have and will be delivered will lose a great deal of their value. The same holds true for the solicitation and promotional program of the Chamber of Commerce. Its effectiveness--measured in terms of the new plants brought into Lowndes County--will depend to a large extent on the actions of the business community and the support provided by all residents of Lowndes County.

And Valdosta and Lowndes County should establish a program now to recover the trade lost to other areas and also to prevent further loss to these same areas. Such loss so far has been balanced to an extent by growth in Valdosta itself, but it is still a loss, and at present the conditions

still prevail which started the trend. It may be necessary for the county to work very hard just to hold what it has.

To accomplish these goals the following steps are essential:

1. The entire business community must be made aware of the community's assets, liabilities, limitations, goals and action programs.
2. There must be a critical, cooperative review by the businessmen of their own establishments and practices.
3. A community clean-up campaign should be started at once.
4. Community planning, including joint city-county planning, must be set up on a continuing basis.
5. Decent streets and parking facilities must be provided downtown.
6. Urban renewal and slum clearance should be accelerated.
7. At least 600 acres of land should be obtained and set aside for parks.
8. The merchants should promote Valdosta as a retail trade center.
9. The business community must actively assist the Chamber of Commerce solicitation program, particularly with leads obtained from salesmen and business associates.
10. Deficit financing must be eliminated.

Obviously most of the steps can and should be instituted simultaneously. Their order does not indicate priority. The success of Valdosta's and Lowndes County's industrial development depends to a great extent on the speed with which these recommendations can be implemented.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Research Aims

An economic analysis of the type presented here really has only one objective--to determine ways to increase the income of the area under study. In this report we have attempted to approach the objective in terms of three distinct but thoroughly interrelated problem areas:

1. industrial development
2. community development
3. customer development

The first of these, industrial development, is our primary focus. It is important to remember, however, that industrial development includes a great deal more than simply tracking down prospects and promotional campaigns. An effective development program concentrates also on community development, for the obvious reason that an industrial prospect must be sold on a community as a place not only to work but also as a place to live. And "customer development," together with community development, can contribute greatly to the economy of an area--first, by insuring that new payrolls are spent at home, and second, by inducing others outside the city to shop in your community.

Valdosta's further progress depends on the intelligent coordination of all three types of development. Neither industrial development nor customer development can be carried out to its fullest extent without a realistic program of community development. The term "realistic" is used to emphasize two things:

1. objective acknowledgment of liabilities;
2. programming as much as (but not more than) can be accomplished toward eliminating or reducing these liabilities.

Although the first paragraph lists three different directions, these approaches are often along the same path. Therefore, although the analysis is divided into sections covering different subjects, frequent reference is made in one section to material belonging in another. The three directions are like the three legs of a tripod. Remove one and the structure cannot stand. More new industry will come in if a city is attractive and has a sound community program. Some companies will not come if this is not the case. Also, industry furnishes the payroll, but without community development many workers may prefer to live elsewhere and commute. Even more may prefer to spend their money elsewhere. At the same time making the city more attractive (community development) can draw tourists (customer development). Conceivably one of the tourists might eventually establish a plant (industrial development).

Both industrial development and customer development might be instituted without much thought for the future. And either one might produce benefits without the other. However, both will grow more steadily and to better effect if the future of the community is considered. But a great deal can be accomplished with a plan based strictly on the present.

Community development, however, can result in wasted money, effort and time if the future is not considered carefully. For community development is not strictly "clean up and paint up." It is concerned with

the most economical use of land, streets and facilities as much as anything else, although a clean up campaign is always a good place to start.

Since this part of the program requires planning for the future, it is reasonable to include all three phases in an industrial development analysis. The future of the city, county and surrounding area must be forecast; and industrial, customer and community development plans must be laid out to fit that future community, taking into consideration the changes that the plan itself will produce.

Population: Valdosta and Lowndes County

One of the basic changes in any community is the change in population. Before attempting to forecast the population of the future, it is necessary to determine what the population is or was at a certain time. Because other data were available for the same date, January 1957 was selected as the month at which the population of Valdosta and Lowndes County were to be determined.

The population of Lowndes County was determined by Dr. John L. Fulmer of the Industrial Development Branch, using statistical methods.^{1/} From this base the changes in the population of the city and of the county were estimated. The population of Valdosta has been estimated variously all the way from 27,000 to 37,000. The estimates have many bases, but all of the methods used ignore the population change in the county as a whole.

^{1/} Population Estimates of Georgia Counties for 1956-57, With Analysis of Reasons for Changes from 1950, by John L. Fulmer, Engineering Experiment Station Special Report No. 33, December, 1957

Using Dr. Fulmer's calculations^{1/} we have traced the likely changes in the population of both the city of Valdosta and in the county outside the city to January 1957. Valdosta itself has had extraordinary growth in recent years, but if we accept the highest estimate, 37,000, we are forced to conclude that there has been a mass migration from rural Lowndes County into the city of Valdosta. If the city's population had increased that much, the rural population would have decreased sharply. A small amount of such absorption could be accounted for by the expansion of the city limits, but an actual house count shows that the population growth really has taken place inside the city limits. Furthermore, the greatest growth has taken place in areas that are within the old city limits. In other words, expansion of the city added land. People moved into these new areas later.

For a number of reasons, although we do believe there has been a large movement of people from surrounding counties into the city of Valdosta, we do not believe that there has been any mass movement from rural Lowndes County into Valdosta. There has been some. The advantages gained from such a move would be small, however. Travel time to work is not large even from the rural areas; a large portion of the industrial workers are part-time farmers; and many of the nonagricultural workers are members of farm families, working to supplement the farm income.

^{1/} Population Estimates of Georgia Counties for 1956-57, With Analysis of Reasons for Changes from 1950, by John L. Fulmer. Engineering Experiment Station Special Report No. 33, December, 1957.

Another reason for feeling that the rural portion of the county has actually increased in population is the growth of unincorporated areas outside the city limits.

Tables 1 and 2 show our estimates of the population changes in the total county, the city and the rural part of the county, as well as our estimate of the population in each in January 1957.

While it is true that there has been a substantial amount of migration out of the county, there has been an even greater in-migration. Valdosta itself received most of the migrants. The rural part of the county actually had a net out-migration, although there was actually migration both ways.

There are essentially two different groups moving out of Lowndes County. Both groups are moving for economic reasons--lack of opportunity. Numbers of colored families are moving; many (in fact almost all) of the high school and college graduates are moving. There is little for them to do in or near Valdosta. The fact that this is a problem common to almost all areas in the South makes it no less a problem for Lowndes County. As fast as Valdosta has grown, it has not grown fast enough nor has its growth been balanced enough to provide jobs for all. The growth in kinds of jobs has been primarily quantitative, not qualitative, and to some degree the two way migration has tended to depress the educational level of the county. There just have not been enough executives among the 7,000 newcomers.

Lowndes was one of less than 10 per cent of Georgia's counties that has attracted people in the last eight years. There is reason

TABLE 1

POPULATION GROWTH OF URBAN AND RURAL
LOWNDES COUNTY 1950-1957

	<u>Total Lowndes County</u>	<u>Valdosta</u>	<u>Rural^{1/} Lowndes County</u>
1957	48,900	31,000	17,900
1950	<u>35,211</u>	<u>20,046</u>	<u>15,165</u>
Increase	13,689	10,954	2,735

TABLE 2

SOURCES OF POPULATION GROWTH
LOWNDES COUNTY 1950-1957

	<u>Total Lowndes County</u>	<u>Valdosta</u>	<u>Rural^{1/} Lowndes County</u>
Natural Increase	6,611	3,751	2,860
Net In- Migration	<u>7,078</u>	<u>7,203</u>	<u>-125</u>
Increase	13,689	10,954	2,735

^{1/} We have defined Rural Lowndes County as the entire county minus the city of Valdosta.

Source: Industrial Development Branch, Georgia Tech Experiment Station

to feel that although Lowndes County may have its setbacks, the long term trend will continue upward. The people concerned with industrial development are energetically soliciting new industry, and the city has almost reached a point in terms of industrial growth and diversity where it will grow industrially to some extent with a minimum of promotion.

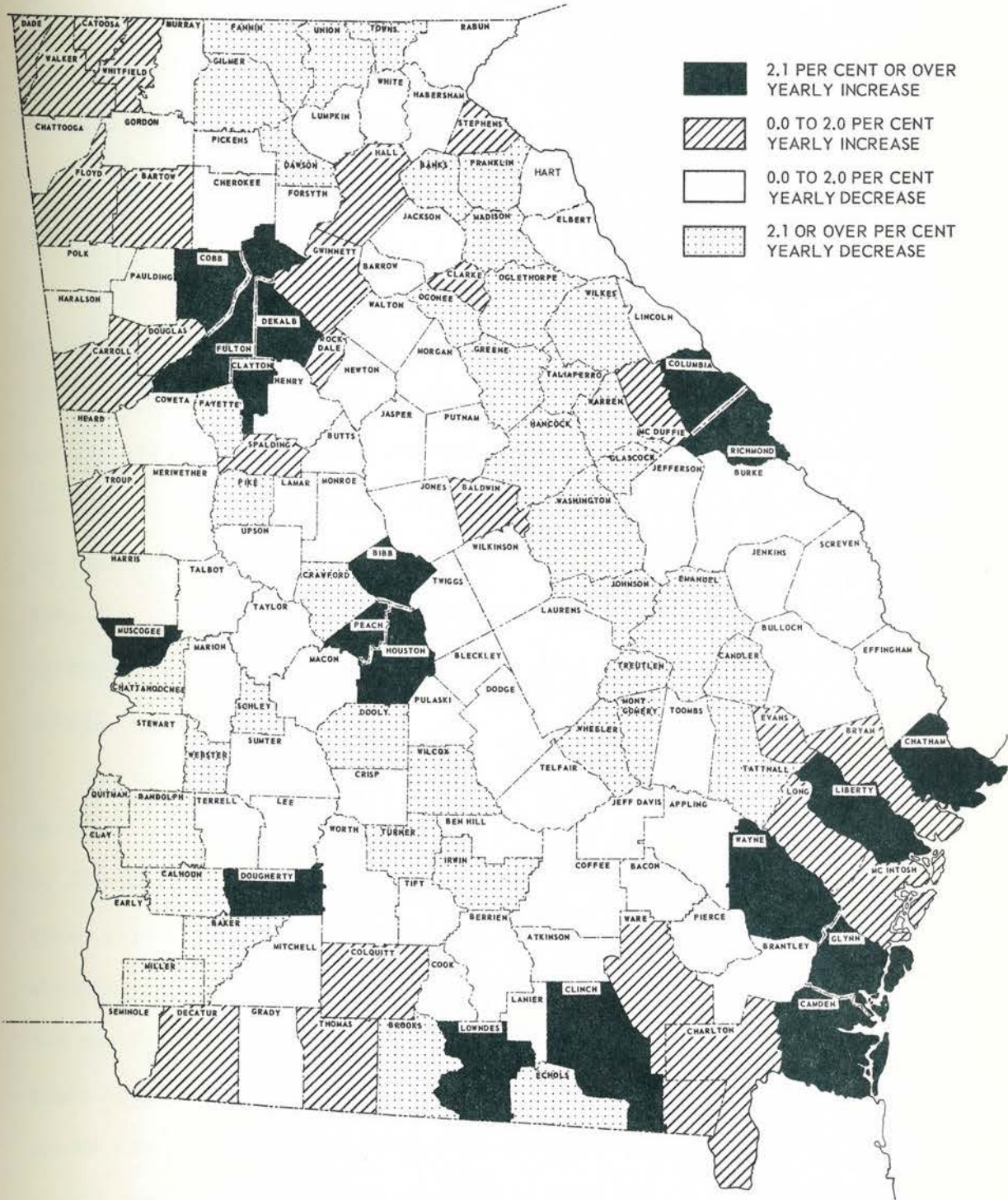
Valdosta's Future Population

At some future time Valdosta will reach such a size that its population can be forecast from a population trend--from historical data. However, it has not yet reached such a size.

The population at any time depends upon two things: the natural increase, that is the excess of births over deaths, and the migration in or out. Migration is a function of economic opportunity. Without such opportunity, out-migration can easily exceed natural increase. (See Chart 1.) Between 1950 and 1956 140 of Georgia's 159 counties had a net out-migration. Chart 1 shows that, with the exception of one special case where there was a temporary in-migration to salvage burned timber, all the counties with large population increases are associated with industrial development, government installations or both. It is obvious that the population of the area varies sharply with economic development.

There is a school of thought which holds that a community should forecast its future population and then assure that there are jobs for the anticipated additions in order to assure that the younger generation does not leave home. There is merit to the suggestion, but it must not be overlooked that providing jobs itself changes the population.

CHART 1
POPULATION INCREASE OF GEORGIA COUNTIES, 1950 TO 1956



Natives of the community will therefore be in competition with immigrants from the surrounding area. Furthermore, in order to keep sons and daughters at home, there must be more than just a certain number of jobs. There must be certain kinds of jobs. Lowndes County has provided the quantity for several years now, but the college graduates and many high school graduates go elsewhere. There have been no jobs for them.

Chart 2 shows a normal population curve for Valdosta based on the ordinary industrial growth that could be expected with Valdosta's natural attractions and without any abnormal changes. The dashed line is a continuation of the curve established by the actual growth of Valdosta between 1930 and 1950, the period when economic change in the South was becoming established. The solid line shows actual change. Since 1950 Valdosta has shown an abnormal increase in its population. Future variations from the dashed line will depend on the changes in the economy.

In this particular case we are defining Moody Air Force Base as an abnormality. It is not the kind of thing most counties can expect to get, and it is extremely unlikely that the county could obtain two such installations at one time. Moody resulted in abnormal growth and without a doubt will result in just as abnormal a drop over the next two years. But Valdosta's industrial development has also been abnormally large recently. It must be remembered also that part of Valdosta's growth was of a naturally temporary type--construction workers. The city's growth seems to have passed a maximum and is now on the downgrade.

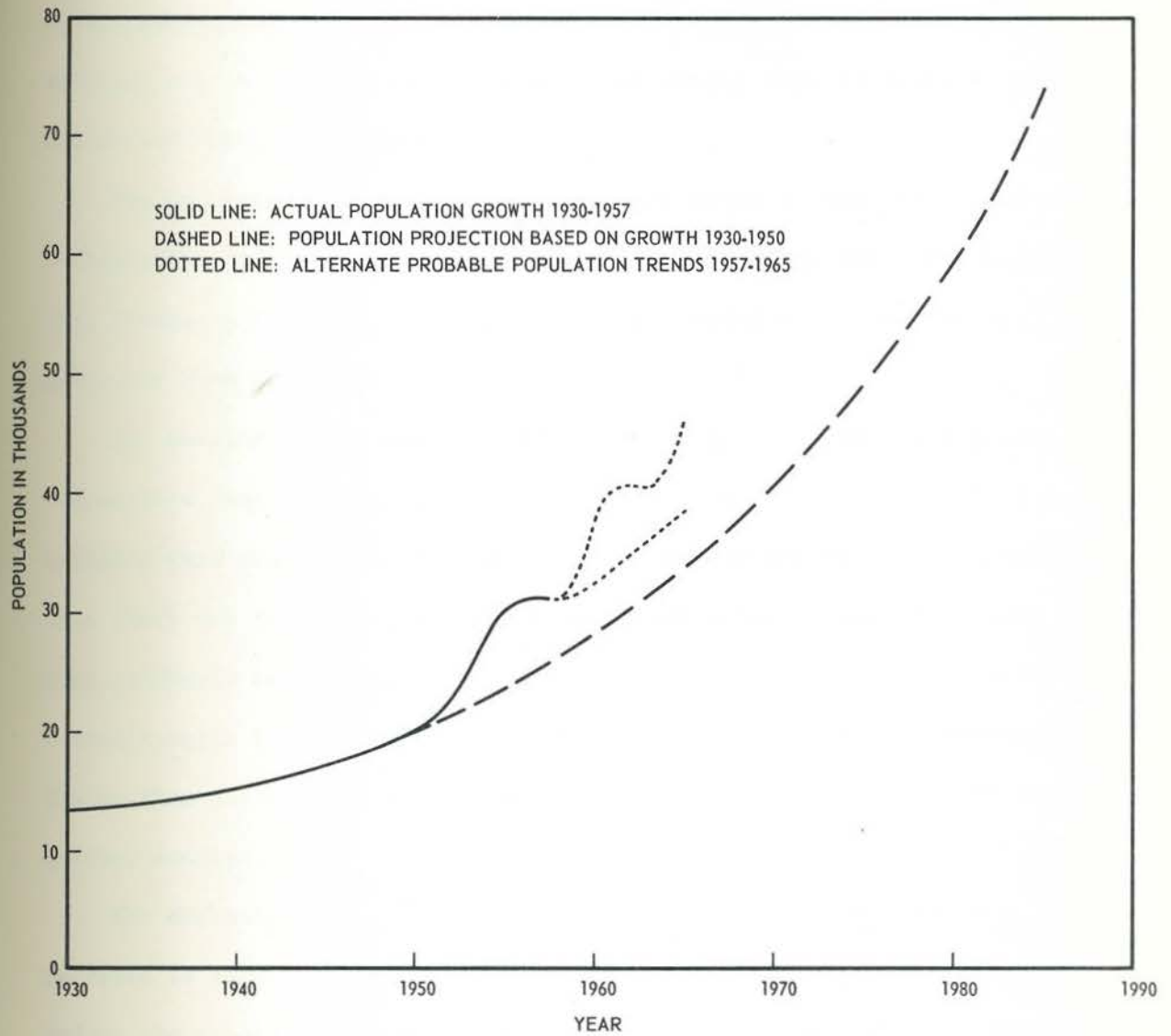
It seems quite unlikely that the drop will continue any great distance, however. In all probability the curve will once again start upward following the projected curve, but some distance above it. Whether the line parallels the projected curve or breaks sharply up again depends almost entirely on the activity of Valdosta's businessmen. Population follows the economy, and as per capita income rises the economy grows even more rapidly than population.

The dotted line on the chart shows two probabilities for Valdosta's future population and therefore, for Valdosta's economy. The lower line shows what will probably happen without an energetic program on the part of Valdosta businessmen; the slump should level off and the population curve should then parallel the dashed line. The result will be an economy somewhat broader than the 1930 to 1950 trend would indicate. Such growth will probably take place even though Moody Air Force Base closes, because Lowndes County does have an active industrial development program.

However, if that industrial development program is supported by the city, county, and the business community in the form of community and customer development programs, the upper curve is more likely to represent the future population. The curve would not be an even one, since rapid expansion tends to go in cycles, with itinerant construction workers moving in to build and moving out when the building is completed.

The population curves indicate that Valdosta might reach a population of 65,000 by 1970 if the industrial development program receives widespread community support. This total will not be reached until 1980 if an action program is not undertaken.

CHART 2
POPULATION PROJECTIONS - VALDOSTA, GA., 1930 TO 1985



It should be remembered that the program we are concerned with is not to be aimed at increasing the population; rather, it is focused on increasing income. But population increases as income increases, although not so rapidly. And the city and county must be prepared to absorb and service the increase.

The sequence of income followed by population is not really as straight-forward as the preceding paragraph might indicate. In actuality, increased income stimulates population growth which in its turn generates some additional income.

But despite the probability of long-term growth, there are strong indications that Valdosta is actually decreasing in size now. It is believed that the population peak was reached and passed in 1957, and that there has been a degree of out-migration since. There has, however, probably been an increase in the available labor force, because a reduction in the number of jobs increases the number of job seekers faster than out-migration decreases them. This subject is covered in another section.

The decrease in population would naturally be accompanied by a decrease in retail sales. Actually, retail sales began to decrease before the population began to decrease. Probably the first customers a city loses are those on the fringes of its market area. These people have the least loyalty and the least reason of any of the city's customers to buy in the town.

This reduction is already occurring at the fringes of Valdosta's market area. People in outlying towns are now either buying at home, buying in other cities, or not buying at all. A number of factors can

cause this loss; all are involved in Valdosta. The recession is certainly responsible for some people's not buying at all, and the desire to save gasoline could be responsible for buying at home. On the other hand, people will buy at home if the home town grows enough to provide services. Several towns have grown enough. In still other cases highways to Valdosta have deteriorated while roads to other cities have improved. Customers start going to other cities, establish habit patterns, and are not likely to return to Valdosta. In this respect Valdosta's economy is shrinking. But it is shrinking in other respects as well.

Table 3 lists the various items that indicate that Valdosta's economy is shrinking at present. The same table shows that the recession is only one item among many causing the contraction. Some of the elements have been in operation for a long time. The general recession has shown its effects more recently although it hit Valdosta earlier than it did Georgia as a whole. Each of the causes listed will receive detailed treatment.

Competition for Retail Market

Except in a few oasis cities like Valdosta, South Georgia towns depend to a great extent on agricultural income to support them. As less and less farm labor has been employed, the income of the town has shrunk. Some of them are working hard to obtain and keep the business of their own townspeople who used to go to the nearest large city. Some are accomplishing their purpose. Another influence is the growth of some of the smaller towns. Even when the counties have been losing population, the county seats have often grown. People move into town to be near the town conveniences and some even commute to their farms.

TABLE 3
CONTRACTION IN VALDOSTA'S ECONOMY

Indicators:

1. Decrease in sales tax receipts
2. Increase in number of vacant houses and apartments
3. Layoffs
4. Long term shrinkage of market area
 - a. Increase in other towns' market areas.

Causes:

1. More efficient retail competition from other cities
2. Decrease in construction
3. Reduction in number of personnel at Moody Air Force Base
4. General recession.

These people, who might once have driven to Valdosta once a week, now shop in the home town throughout the week. This growth may even encourage the opening of a new store which creates an additional incentive to shop at home. Therefore, the small towns are in competition with Valdosta.

The large towns are in competition with Valdosta also. They are using two main weapons--better highways and better parking facilities. In these two categories Valdosta lags badly. With regard to highways, those in Valdosta's vicinity are poor and their condition remains poor right into the heart of the city. Many of Valdosta's streets are as bad as the highways. They are narrow, poorly paved and cluttered with parked cars. No matter how good individual stores are these drawbacks will drive some customers elsewhere.

Decrease in Construction

Moody Air Force Base's reactivation and the building of the paper mill furnished a large number of construction jobs in the county. This construction generated still more construction, since services and homes were required for the employees of the air base and the paper mill. Even some of the newly arrived construction workers wanted homes. Building has never stopped in Lowndes County, but it passed its peak some time ago. The construction workers who had been spending money in Valdosta have begun to move out. For quite a while new manufacturing jobs took up the slack, but even after the factories had reached peak employment, construction continued to drop off, deflating the Lowndes economy to some extent. Construction is still going on, but the big boom is in

the past. If a forceful program is initiated, another one can develop in the future.

Reduction of Personnel at Moody Air Force Base

As construction was declining at Moody Air Force Base, civilian and military personnel took the place of the construction workers. The base was able to furnish enough income to support the loss of the construction income and also the loss of the cigar factory which moved away from Valdosta at about the same time. However, there is nothing at present to balance the reduction in personnel at Moody Air Force Base. In fact, Lowndes County is in the midst of a recession now, so that whereas in the past there has been at least one growing employer to cushion the effect of curtailed employment elsewhere, now employment is being cut throughout the Valdosta economic sphere. To make matters worse, military bases are ordinarily not directly affected by economic depressions. Here the reduction in force at Moody is accelerating the effects of the general recession. The payroll at the air base has been larger than the entire manufacturing payroll, and since the rate of pay at the base is higher than average, any reduction in personnel has a greater than average effect on the economy.

It is true that much of Moody's payroll does not reach Valdosta. A large number of the air base people live outside Lowndes County. The base commissary and the post exchange siphon off much of the payroll; but there has also been a substantial civilian payroll which is being reduced. Furthermore, whereas the economy as a whole may have reached its worst point already, Lowndes County has not. Moody Air Force Base will probably complete its present mission in 1960. Plans

are to reduce personnel over that entire period. In view of the large share of the County's income provided by the air base, Lowndes will be hard put to replace this income no matter how much industry is brought in or started locally.

This contraction must not be thought of in terms of the reduction in Moody's payroll alone or manufacturing payrolls alone. As the air base transfers or lays off 10 people, fewer clerks are required in service establishments. As the air base reduces personnel by 100 or more an entire store or service station might be forced below the break-even point and go out of business. Therefore, a reduction in force in either government or manufacturing produces reductions in other parts of the economy which in turn exert an additional depressing effect on the local economic life by causing further layoffs.

Therefore, although the manufacturing establishments may very well keep the people they now have, Valdosta's retail stores can expect a continuing reduction in sales as the air base reduces its work force. This reduction will not have the full effect on Valdosta it might, for reasons noted above. Nevertheless, the impact is and will be substantial, and the contraction will continue for another two years unless the mission of the field is changed.

General Recession

Tables 4 and 5, obtained from two different sources, indicate the same thing--that retail sales have dropped considerably. It should also be noted that the sales began to drop while the population was still rising and before the announcement that Moody Air Force Base would have a limited future. The general recession hit Valdosta

TABLE 4
COUNTY RETAIL SALES^{1/}

	<u>Dougherty</u>	<u>Lowndes</u>
1957	93,608,213	58,035,643
1956	94,910,320	66,924,881

POPULATION

	<u>Dougherty</u>	<u>Lowndes</u>
1957	70,653	49,788
1956	67,105	48,207

PER CAPITA RETAIL SALES

	<u>Dougherty</u>	<u>Lowndes</u>
1957	1,325	1,166
1956	1,414	1,388

^{1/} These figures are not comparable with those in Table 5 since the sources are different. Table 5 is based on fiscal year, while Table 4 is based on calendar year.

Source: Georgia State Chamber of Commerce;
Georgia State Department of Labor

TABLE 5

RETAIL SALES LOWNDES COUNTY
FISCAL YEARS ENDING JUNE 30

Apparent Retail Sales^{1/}

1953	\$56,401,409
1954	59,014,427
1955	61,238,067
1956	66,384,516
1957	62,397,573

$$62,397,573 \div 49,000 = \$1,273 \text{ per capita retail sales}$$

Population

June 30, 1956 ^{2/}	48,207
June 30, 1957	<u>49,788</u>
Average population fiscal year ending June 30, 1957	<u>2/97,995</u> 48,997

1/ State Department of Revenue, Sales Tax Unit. Includes purchases of machinery and equipment for use in manufacturing; excludes government and state purchases.

2/ Population Estimates of Georgia Counties for 1956-1957, With Analysis of Reasons for Changes from 1950, by John L. Fulmer. Engineering Experiment Station Special Report No. 33, December, 1957.

somewhat earlier than it did Georgia as a whole. The paper mill is working only at part capacity; automobile manufacture has been cut back; the weather hurt several other businesses. Valdosta has had a poor winter from an economic point of view.

The Area's Economic Development

It should be re-emphasized that many of these damping factors affect each other and reinforce each other. Layoffs cause layoffs; decreases in construction result in decreases in the manufacture of lumber and concrete products, which in turn cause reductions in retail personnel, and so on.

The area has suffered a series of economic blows while most areas have suffered only one. To insure that Valdosta fully recovers, businessmen must be willing to put forth considerable effort to push not only Valdosta's recovery but its continued growth.

If no additional effort is added to what is now being done, Valdosta will continue to grow. Industry now knows of Valdosta, and its location is strategic for supplying the Florida markets. Industry is being actively solicited and some will be obtained. However, growth in the long run can and does still mean short-run hardships. Right now Valdosta is shrinking in population, in production, and in income.

Since the merchants and the landlords will be the ones directly affected, they should work together for the purpose of countering the loss of customers. Their program would be part of an overall three-part program outlined below. Of the three parts, they logically should concentrate on customer development and community development.

Even when the community recovers, for a long time its growth is

unlikely to be sufficient to absorb its high school and college graduates. Furthermore, its natural growth will not be as rapid as it could be with an organized program. Nor will its natural growth necessarily be balanced growth. With a three-legged industrial development program the entire area should go forward at a more rapid rate even than before.

Of these, community development is really everyone's job, since its accomplishment makes the community a better place to live. However, the profits will accrue to the merchants and landlords first. Since "customer development" is primarily their job, it is likely that their efforts will be required to keep both programs going. Actually, there will be only one program with three facets. Each, however, will be treated in a separate section.

THE VALDOSTA AREA'S ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

The soliciting of new plants for the Lowndes County area is being carried out in a businesslike manner. Not much needs to be said about this phase of the program.

In order to solicit new types of industry efficiently and with authority, the people doing the soliciting must know Valdosta and Lowndes County thoroughly. This section of the report is devoted to knowing the product (Valdosta), to recommended improvements in that product, and to ways different aspects of the product can be put to additional or better uses.

Industrial development has long been thought to be merely the process of getting leads, contacting prospects and then talking them into building a plant. Many businessmen probably feel that this is just the way they run their own companies. Neither industrial development nor business is really as simple as this. Actually, businesses are run, often unconsciously, on a rather scientific basis. Top salesmen follow the same procedure, whether they are selling a product or a community. The procedure is:

1. Know your wares thoroughly.
2. Know your competitors' wares.
3. Select prospects on the basis of your product's capabilities or advantages.
4. Analyze each prospect carefully to determine:
 - a. his needs,
 - b. his personal preferences.
5. Prepare a suitable plan of attack for each prospect.
6. Sell the product.

In industrial development, often only number six is used. Almost never do communities go beyond part of number one and all of number six. For a long time this procedure worked, because competition was not keen. Competition is extremely keen today. An industrialist can be sure someone will come along and offer him exactly what he wants. A good salesman would not try to sell a bicycle to a man who needs a wheel chair; neither would he attempt to sell a product without knowing its specifications.

In industrial development the community is the product. Those helping to sell should know this product thoroughly. A list of specifications corresponds to a list of assets and liabilities. The listing, however, is not an analysis. The combination of assets is worth much more than the same assets individually. The developer should not only know what his community's characteristics are, but also what the combination of characteristics is useful for.

The Lowndes County area has a great number of assets plus another large group of potential assets. The potential assets depend almost entirely on group action, and have been or will be discussed in other sections. Many of the so-called assets will have liability aspects to them. The Industrial Development Branch has already used the following information in studying the feasibility of manufacturing products in the Valdosta area; other studies are in process.

Industrial Sites

Industrial development is impossible without a suitable plot of land on which to put a factory. It is common to hear that a community has "plenty of sites," but such a remark can easily mean the community has none. Often one who claims "plenty of sites" actually means plenty of land.

An industrial site is not just a vacant plot of land, however. The land is an industrial site only if it meets several criteria. Foremost among the

criteria is availability at the right price. An investigation frequently shows that either the land is not available at all or the price is too high. In a county near Lowndes it was almost impossible to find land for a small plant. Although the people in the county "knew" that they had plenty of land, none was available for sale. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for land which had been available at the right price to jump to a much higher price when an industry becomes interested. In other cases the owners use the land for other purposes. Right in Valdosta two sites listed in the "Industrial Site Brochure" were diverted to other uses in one month. "Available" then should mean optioned or tied down by some other means to assure that the person or persons dealing with the prospect can make definite commitments.

The requirements for industry vary, but in general it is desirable for the land to be gently sloping, well drained, adjacent to or near utilities, rail and highway facilities. The site should be completely safe from flooding. In most cases it should be away from residential areas to avoid nuisance problems.

Valdosta now has the beginning of an excellent industrial park. At present it is merely a tract of land. Utilities and transportation facilities must be made available, and a great deal of information must be obtained in order to turn it into a real industrial park.

A likely spot in the future for a small industrial area is the section in the Crane Street Urban Renewal section. The railroad service here would be excellent, since three different railroads serve the area. Hill and Adley have prepared a plan for the renewal section which should create an excellent industrial and commercial site. If the urban renewal program is pushed through promptly Valdosta will have at least two definite sites, and

the prospect will have a wide degree of latitude in making a selection.

The railroads also own industrial property definitely earmarked for industry. Only the railroads, however, can make commitments on these. Finally, there are a number of sites presently being held for industry, but on which no options are held and no price has been set. Commitments cannot be made without consulting the owner. This last group is of doubtful value except in those cases where the land is strategically located. Prospects are so accustomed to such answers as "I think I can get it for . . ." that they are prone to discount anything but firm and definite terms. This last group stands much less chance of being sold for industrial use unless the owners grant options to the Chamber of Commerce for the sites. If such options are granted, the sites can really be considered available. Chamber of Commerce people hesitate to show sites on which they cannot make a firm price for fear of letting down the prospect.

The assured sites are among the area's most valuable assets, and should be protected as such. A plant must have land to occupy, and all the additional assets a city may offer will be valueless without a suitable parcel of land.

Protection for the good sites is therefore essential. Residences should be excluded by industrial zoning. At present zoning in Valdosta excludes industry from residential areas, but permits residences in industrial areas. Residences in an industrial area not only can create traffic and congestion problems, but eventually may create friction. After several years, the people living in the industrial area may decide that the industry is a nuisance and ought to move. This can happen even though the industry was established before the housing.

Not to be overlooked in connection with sites is the low cost of construction. Valdosta is in a most favorable position here. Detailed

information on costs will be included in a later report.

Physical Environment

Climate and geography are probably two of Georgia's most misunderstood and poorly exploited resources. Many northerners would be amazed to learn the facts about your climate. It would be worth your while to obtain statements on the climate and geography from "transplanted northerners."^{1/}

The climate in Valdosta is such that operations of any kind can be carried on all year round; it also is the type to attract vacationers for most of the year. A good customer development program would be required, of course, to exploit the vacation possibilities. But the climate could be one of many assets used to attract industry, if it were pointed out that outdoor recreation possibilities exist for such a long period each year--actually all year if one considers the short distance to the Florida resorts.

It should be remembered, however, that the northerner has a misconception of the Georgia climate and of Georgia topography. To the northerner Georgia is a hot "desert of sand and clay," a treeless waste. Georgia has done a very poor job of publicizing its assets and unfortunately, to sell Valdosta you must first sell Georgia.

Valdosta has resort climate and topography without resort prices. The actual resorts are near enough for week-end trips but not so close as to cause absenteeism or labor turnover.

Hotels, Motels and Restaurants

Like many other facets of this community, the hotels, motels, and restaurants will make an impression on any industrial prospects who might visit your town. They should therefore be evaluated in terms of the

^{1/} Much of the comment in this section is taken from the Georgia Tech Industrial Development Manual; it is used by permission.

impressions they are likely to leave with someone accustomed to "the best."

Valdosta's motels are good and the better restaurants are located nearby. The Daniel Ashley Hotel was built in what once was an ideal location. The location has now, however, become something of a liability, since it is too close to the railroad. In many rooms sleep is completely disrupted when a train comes through town.

With regard to restaurants, Valdosta does not have one that is likely to be identified with the city. It will not be too long until Highway 75 brings an enormous volume of traffic past Valdosta. A "name" restaurant could divert a great deal of traffic that might otherwise not stop, and could serve the commercial traffic as well. If the tourists stop at Valdosta for a meal, perhaps they will also spend the night and buy souvenirs.

Retail Stores

Since firms considering new locations sometimes send employees (or employees' wives) shopping in local stores as one means of determining the attitudes of local people toward strangers and toward new firms, your merchants are likely to play an important role in your development program. Individually, many stores are attractive and have courteous and helpful salespeople. But it is difficult for one store to look its best when nearby stores are unattractive. Furthermore, it reflects on the entire business community when two or three merchants make persons feel that they should not leave the store without buying something. The first characteristic is obvious; the second is possibly not even considered a fault by the merchants, but it is a liability and it can send customers to other cities to shop.

Parking and street conditions are two definite liabilities to the retail area, but they are covered adequately elsewhere.

Recreational Facilities

Having adequate recreational facilities for the people of your town can mean a great deal to an industrial prospect, since he will probably want to know what opportunities his employees will have for relaxation and entertainment off the job.

Valdosta is in an area where there is wide opportunity for week-end recreation, but not a great deal of opportunity for evening recreation. Nevertheless, for a town of its size, Valdosta probably has better than average night recreational facilities. There is a definite shortage of daytime facilities, however. The opportunities for hunting, fishing and golfing are there, although not available to everyone. The main shortage is in parks--the kind of thing that gives the entire family a chance to relax outdoors. With such a long season for outdoors living, Lowndes County should have at least one large municipal park or a state park.

Educational and Training Facilities

Firms considering your town will be greatly interested in facilities for training employees. They will also want to know how adequate your schools are. Most of them will be aware of the fact that schools in the South have generally lagged behind the rest of the nation; they may therefore be especially interested in learning how good an education their children--or their employees' children--can expect.

Valdosta stands well in this respect. Children can go all the way through college without leaving the city and the standards are above average. Since some facilities are available for employee training, the education in the area can definitely be considered an asset. This does not mean, of course, that improvements cannot be made.

Medical, Hospital and Public Health Facilities

This is another category where the facilities are a definite asset to the community, and may go a long way toward making the city a good place to live--and hence a good place to put a factory.

Fire Protection

Protection of investments in plant and equipment, safety of workers and of their own families, and the insurance rates they pay make fire protection important to an industrialist. Inside the city limits, Valdosta seems to have good protection, and the protection is improving. Outside the city limits, however, protection is poor. Fortunately, the city itself has a great deal of land available for industrial development at favorable prices.

Transportation

The quick and efficient distribution of its products is obviously important to most industrial concerns. Ready access to a main rail line is essential for many firms, together with proximity to an excellent highway.

Valdosta combines its major assets in this category. Although water transportation is not available, Valdosta is located at the junction of three railroads and five major highways. At present some of the highways are in poor condition, but the future is very bright. One of the two north-south interstate highways to Florida will pass right by Valdosta. The value of this particular asset will be determined by what use Valdosta makes of the balance of its attractions.

It should be noted, Lowndes County citizens cannot think of this new highway as their exclusive property. Many other cities are on it as well. One that may well prove tough competition will be Lake City,

Florida, which is scheduled for two interstate highways--one north and south, the other east and west. This will prove an excellent example for the admonition "Know your competition."

Once again a combination of features is much more valuable than the same features separately. The location of the airport at Valdosta plus the fact that it is served by two airlines would be a good attraction itself. Combined with the balance of Valdosta's transportation facilities, the airport places Valdosta quite high in the transportation category.

There are certain things that need to be done in conjunction with the construction of Highway 75 and the 84 bypass. These recommendations are outlined in detail in the section on community development.

Your local bus line must be considered an asset, although its main value may be merely in its promotional value--in being able to say that Valdosta has such a service.

Available Labor Supply

Your manpower is a most valuable resource. Certainly it will be a critical factor in the location decisions of most firms you may contact. Lowndes County is in a very favorable position with respect to quantity. The high population density in Lowndes County, plus the willingness--even eagerness--of people from surrounding counties to commute or move to the job offers a large quantity of available labor even during periods of full employment. An estimated 7,000 people moved into Lowndes County in seven years to seek work.

In terms of quantity it is very difficult to visualize a shortage of labor in the area, because people move into the county as rapidly as jobs are offered. Actually, the quantity of applications for employment

is directly proportional to the wage. Applications have run as high as 10 for each job opportunity.

In terms of different types of labor available, a somewhat different story is apparent. Most of the available labor is unskilled; there is even a shortage of high school and college graduates. Valdosta is still not large enough to supply jobs to all its high school and college graduates. Therefore, graduates seek jobs elsewhere. On the other hand, certain firms in the area would like to hire high school graduates exclusively. They have not been entirely successful. All of the graduates do not want the jobs now offered; in addition, the requests for employees do not coincide with graduation. Therefore, high school graduates tend to be gone when the requests come.

However, graduation from high school does not assure aptitude, and the firms in Lowndes County have been able to fill their jobs without trouble. They would, however, like to have the extra advantages that the additional education provides.

The situation on male labor is, however, quite satisfactory. Firms with higher requirements usually pay higher wages. The higher the wages are, the larger the number of applicants and the more selective the company can be. Firms already in the county have always found more than enough people with high aptitudes. Although there are very few people with skills to fit the requirements of individual industries, there are plenty of readily trainable people who can be employed at any time. If the shortage of skills is a liability, it is a small one. In any event, expanding companies are thinking many years ahead. Most therefore prefer to train unskilled people rather than bid for skilled people employed elsewhere by offering higher wages.

Here, wages can be considerably lower than in more highly industrialized areas and still attract enough applicants to assure higher production per employee. This productivity stems from two things: the fact that the employer can be selective in hiring, and the fact that the lack of an industrial history means also a lack of artificial limits on production.

The female labor situation is not so clear. Needlework firms need a large pool of labor to draw from because of the extremely high turnover in employment during the first few years of operation. Sewing machine piecework requires high speed and a high degree of concentration. Relatively few women have both. Other complicating factors exist in that women who have never worked in a factory do not really know whether or not they want to work. They think they do until they find out how difficult the work is and how steadily they must keep at it. Therefore even some of those with the necessary aptitudes decide after a short while that the work is too difficult. Others work only long enough to pay off an appliance or to buy a new one, or perhaps long enough to get Christmas money.

Consequently, in the needle industry, there will be a high turnover for the first few years that a company is in a new area. Once a sewing company establishes a plant in a new area it is usually difficult to get a second for a long time. First, the original company has selected the best workers, and second, the first company's high turnover represents a psychological deterrent.

This does not mean, however, that plants cannot be found to employ women. Many plants doing assembling offer good employment for women; in this field Lowndes County has much to gain and much to offer.

There is no shortage of female help in the area. There is a problem in selecting those who want high wages enough to be willing to turn out the production required in the sewing industry. For moderate wage assembly work, however, there are plenty of women.

Nevertheless, Valdosta's number one problem now and in the future will be finding employment for men--men without high skills but with high aptitudes. These high aptitudes derive from the large number of applicants from which a company can select.

Employment for men would have the effect of stabilizing women's employment as well. Some of the turnover in women's employment can be attributed to the fact that the husbands do not have jobs which pay as well as their wives' jobs. As a result the husbands may go elsewhere looking for work and take their families with them.

Lowndes County's labor relations history is, of course, a major asset. It is worth noting that the county has 3,000 manufacturing employees and no labor troubles.

The labor relations history, combined with letters from local employers on their own letterheads certifying the high aptitudes, productivity and dependability of the labor force will do more to eliminate northern prejudices than anything else.

And we must acknowledge that these prejudices exist; that they may be untrue does not make them less of an obstacle to be overcome.

Markets

For many industries, Florida's and Georgia's rapidly growing markets offer the greatest inducement of all for the location of new plants in Lowndes County. Separate studies are being made on individual items; two are being submitted with this report. Others are in process.

Residents of Lowndes County can do a certain amount of market research by compiling information from merchants, manufacturers, tourists and salesmen.

Water

For some industries water can be the Valdosta area's most important resource. Lowndes County is somewhat handicapped by the lack of a large river. On the other hand, there is plenty of underground water that can be used by plants and discharged into local streams. There is even another stream on which it is reported that another group of settling basins could be constructed similar to the one near Clyattville.

For cooling purposes the chemical content of the water is not a critical item; but if the water is to be used for processing purposes, it is. However, it is not practical to attempt to decide in advance whether the water will be suitable for individual chemical industries. In any case, the possibility will always exist that other factors will make it worthwhile to treat the water so as to make it satisfactory for a particular industry.

Sewage and Waste Disposal

Sanitary waste presents no problem for some time in the future. The main feature to be emphasized with regard to waste disposal is really a community attitude item rather than a waste disposal item. The waste disposal system created for the paper mill demonstrated an ability to solve a specific problem involving the lack of a large stream, but people in Lowndes County must not feel that the ability to solve such a problem gives them the equivalent of a river. It does not.

Companies with waste disposal problems would still rather have a

river. But the community attitude shown in making available a substitute system is a major asset in itself and might be more important to the company than the river. Once again a combination of assets is involved.

In any case there seems to be at least one other site for such a system in the eastern part of the county.

Electric Power

There are two main features to be brought out with regard to power. One is the fact that power lines come into Valdosta from three different directions, almost eliminating the possibility of power failure.

At present the price of power is somewhat high. However, the price will be the same as elsewhere in the Georgia Power Company's system by 1960. These prices are generally favorable. Georgia Power Company's engineers are available to consult with new industries regarding their requirements.

Fuels

Natural gas is, of course, the favored industrial fuel, and Valdosta is fortunate in having gas. The recent price rise still leaves the cost of industrial gas considerably lower than in northern areas which are farther from the gas fields.

The industrial sites within the city are served by Atlanta Gas Light Company, whose engineers are available to consult with any prospect regarding service.

There is a problem regarding the availability of interruptible gas. South Georgia Natural Gas Company still does not have all the winter gas it would like and must approve any contract for interruptible gas.

Beyond the city limits natural gas might not be obtainable at all although for large quantities the gas company will request permission

from the Federal Power Commission to serve the customer; but oil and coal are available anywhere. In very large quantities coal might prove to be the cheapest fuel of all, but such a possibility would be subject to individual study. The railroad would be glad to help in a study of this sort.

In special cases, bark might be used as a supplementary fuel. Two companies in the area burn it now.

Banking

This feature does not even require comment. Valdosta has three large banks and two savings and loan associations. Hahira has an additional bank. The branch of the Citizens and Southern offers the additional advantages of being able to call on the resources of other units of the Citizens and Southern system. Banking in Valdosta is definitely an asset.

Churches and Civic Clubs

Valdosta and Lowndes County are well supplied with both churches and civic clubs, so that no prospective Valdosta manufacturer need worry about either his employees' or his own requirements in this respect. To this extent Lowndes County has an asset.

The churches and civic clubs can considerably multiply their asset value, however, by actively supporting the community development program that has been recommended.

Government

Both city and county government have been supporting the industrial development program, which indicates a forward-looking attitude. However, the city's deficit financing has been a definite liability.

It should be noted, however, that deficit financing can be desirable where assured future income results.

The hiring of a city manager who can devote all his time to running the city should facilitate the end of deficit financing, although the city will probably have to obtain additional revenue to do so. It would be highly desirable to secure a man who would be capable of working with the Chamber of Commerce on the municipal aspects of the community development program. However, it would not be wise to wait until a manager is hired to start the program. It may take some time to select a man; he will then need time to get acquainted with the city.

In any case, there is adequate proof that both the city and the county have cooperated fully in industrial development. The waste disposal system and the industrial park are outstanding examples.

Community Appearance

This feature and the following one represent the two weakest parts of the industrial development picture. It is not that Valdosta does not have very attractive sections. It does. But the more attractive sections are not apparent. If he comes from any direction except north, the most unattractive sights greet a visitor first as he enters town. Even coming into the city from the north the traveler does not see the best section of town without looking for it. The situation is quite different in Albany, Valdosta's main competitor, where the visitor will not see any slums unless he looks for them.

There are other major flaws in Valdosta's appearance; these are covered adequately in the section on Community Development.

The important thing to remember is that the persons to be sold do not know Valdosta. Therefore, they will think and act on what they

have had time to find out.

Streets

Streets are Valdosta's second important weakness. First of all, they are rough and generally poorly paved. Second, the street layout demonstrates conclusively that Valdosta needed community planning many years ago. There is no overall street plan; it is difficult to get from one part of the city to another by a direct route. Even with a map a stranger may need a companion to watch for the proper turns. Fortunately, the urban renewal plan calls for cutting Oak Street through to make one more north-south through street. Valdosta will still have far too many dead-end streets right in the city, however. In addition the few existing through streets are narrow and filled with parked cars.

Many of the items described above have both asset and liability features. Valdosta's major liabilities can be eliminated or converted to assets if the entire city is willing to support a community development program. For those with an industrial development viewpoint a community development program in itself would be excellent promotional material.

The next major section outlines fairly completely Valdosta's community development needs over the next several years.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

While this phase is an essential one, it is no more important than either of the others. It is, however, the area in which the sharpest gains can be accomplished, because so little has been done in some parts of this phase. Furthermore, those parts on which a few people have been working hard have received little general support.

Since this study was initiated the City of Valdosta has taken two significant forward steps. Voters approved the hiring of a city manager, and the Crane Street Urban Renewal plan has been completed. Some progress has also been made on joint city-county planning.

Outside of Valdosta proper, Hahira has completed a land-use map. Citizens there have a sewerage program up for study and have hired Hill and Adley Associates to make a planning study of the town. Lowndes County is becoming aware of its own importance and its own needs.

These needs include planning for growth, plus making and keeping the city and county an attractive place in which to live. One item calling for immediate attention is the appearance of some sections of the city.

Community Appearance

Although Valdosta has many attractive sections, the approaches to the city are discouraging. Coming into town from the east, west or south, drab conditions give the traveler a poor impression. Since first impressions may be extremely important, some industrial prospects may already have been lost because they or members of their families decided upon reaching the city that Valdosta was not a desirable place in which to live.

The approach from the north is not yet unattractive, but unless immediate action is taken on a joint city-county basis to protect peripheral areas, the sections just north of the city are likely to degenerate rapidly as the

city grows. Many examples of just such areas can be found now just outside cities on our main highways. Zoning can keep the suburbs from deteriorating and can therefore keep land values up. At present the attractiveness of the area around the northern end of the city is offset by the poor condition of the highway.

When the new limited access highway is completed, much of the traffic may come in from the west. If this happens, many tourists are likely to be discouraged by that section's appearance, turn back to the highway and continue on to Florida. Aside from the tourist money lost in this way, it must be remembered that many industrial prospects are tourists; many plant locations result from a tourist's being favorably impressed with a town.

Whether or not it is feasible to do a complete improvement job on the approaches to the city, a community-wide improvement program is certainly in order. The urban renewal plan and the city hall are good starts and should be springboards for persuading property owners to do their parts in a full-scale clean up campaign. Many people in the business district have already completed the renovations of their establishments. But this renovation merely emphasizes the fact that a number of the other downtown stores need to do the same thing.

Whereas other cities in Valdosta's general area present a pleasing appearance along the main thoroughfares, Valdosta itself does so only in certain sections, notably along North Patterson and North Ashley. People coming in from the airport see a poor section of the city on the way to the center of town. Probably most industrial prospects will be coming in from the airport and will therefore get a bad first impression.

Other cities close enough to Valdosta to compete for the same industries have managed to keep their main streets very attractive. Some of

these streets are lined with trees. Whether or not these same cities are as attractive as Valdosta in other parts of the town, they do make a good first impression. And they are continuing their improvement programs, as Albany's early May announcement of plans for further street widening indicates.

The importance of appearance occasionally is brought home dramatically to a community which lost an industry because of its unsightly sections. It is not often that a town can find out why a company chooses another community. In any case, most firms are public relations conscious and hesitate to describe a town's shortcomings. The company may very well have customers in the unsuccessful town. Recently, however, the Shelbyville (Tennessee) Times-Gazette obtained such information from one company. Number one among the reasons was, "The approaches to Shelbyville were not considered attractive and inviting--the slums are more pronounced and noticeable than in the town chosen." ^{1/}

The criticism would apply just as well if "Valdosta" were substituted for "Shelbyville." Valdosta's most important competitor--Albany--put on a drive just after the war to eliminate slums. Today, that city has attractive approaches to the city, wide streets, no parking problems and a booming central business district. With less manufacturing employment, its population is nevertheless growing faster and its per capita income is higher than Valdosta's; people for many miles around drive to the city to spend their money.

Finally, among the immediate jobs to be faced is that of providing a "face lifting" for much of the central business district.

^{1/} See Appendix for complete editorial.

It would be a mistake to discount the importance of an attractive setting to retail sales. It is important for two reasons: First, it attracts people to shop in the area. Second, it stimulates people to buy more. They tend to linger and to pay attention to other items available for purchase.

The improvement that has taken place at the corner of Hill and Patterson might serve as a stimulus. It certainly serves to emphasize the contrast between the new, attractive establishments and many others. Two changes needed are a new or completely renovated post office and court house. Attention is called to the transformation in Moultrie's court house and the difference it has made to Moultrie's central business district.

If no effort is made to solve these problems, the business district may gradually move elsewhere. Valdosta is getting big enough now so that a separate complete shopping section is not too far fetched. On the other hand, Valdosta is not so large that a full-size shopping center on the outskirts of town would be too far for people to drive. In any case, it might not be necessary to establish new stores more than a few blocks away. Much of the old residential area is now zoned commercial, and an enterprising group might very well attempt to move the business district elsewhere, offering plenty of free parking, easy access and attractive stores.

Highways

Compounding Valdosta's problem is the fact that highways to other cities are in better condition than they are to Valdosta. Both tourists and truckers bypass Valdosta on their way north or south because of the condition of Highway 41. The new highway will not be in operation for three years or more. Therefore, a program for highway improvement now

is in order. We discussed the resurfacing of the highway north of Valdosta with the Georgia Highway Department recently, and received some indication that the work would be done soon. However, some follow-up might prove helpful.

Valdosta cannot stay within its present city limits forever. Several forces are working to change the city's profile and economic structure. One of the most important of those forces is the new interstate highway to Tampa. Highway 75 will be one of the two north-south limited access highways to Florida. (See Chart 3.) This road will tend to funnel all traffic from the Midwest past Valdosta's doorstep. It will also make it much easier for people in towns along the highway to go to Valdosta to shop. The highway will bring three sources of income to Valdosta--tourists, shoppers, and truck drivers.^{1/} The city must be ready to serve them.

It is probable that the truck drivers will not want to come all the way into town, but their contribution to the economy should not be minimized. They spend good money for meals and entertainment and they pass the word along to other truck drivers about good places to stop. On the other hand, shoppers will definitely want to come into town and the tourists might. There are several roads from the highway they might use to reach the city. (See Chart 4.) One road, Highway 41, is the only one that presents an attractive approach to the city. It has the additional advantage that the motels and restaurants are also on that road. But there are other roads that might be used. Two of these pass through the worst slums in the city. No doubt shoppers will soon choose the road they prefer and if they can

^{1/} The highway will not be directly responsible for bringing commercial traffic to the city. The salesmen go to a town whether the highway is good or bad.

CHART 3
THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS

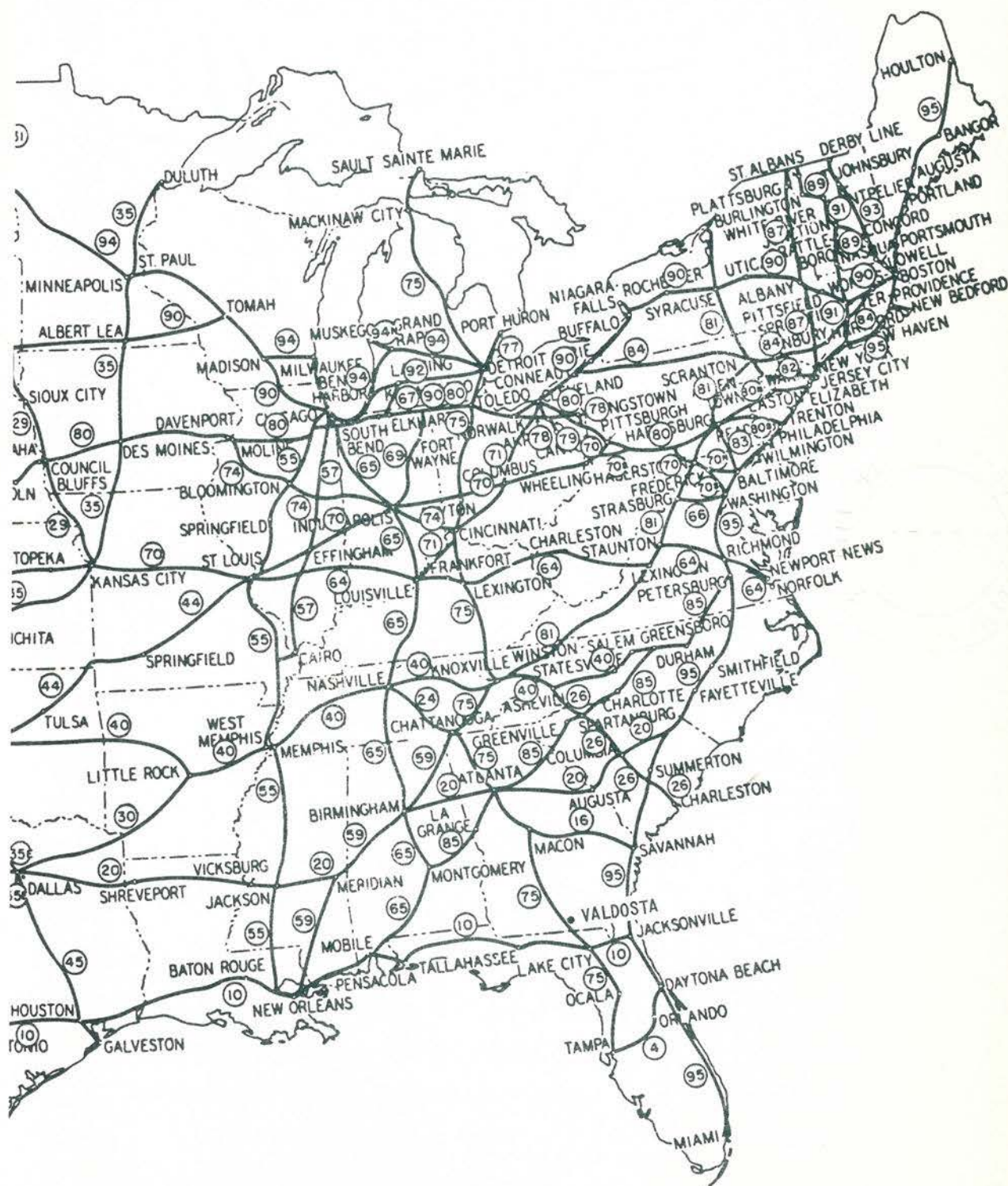
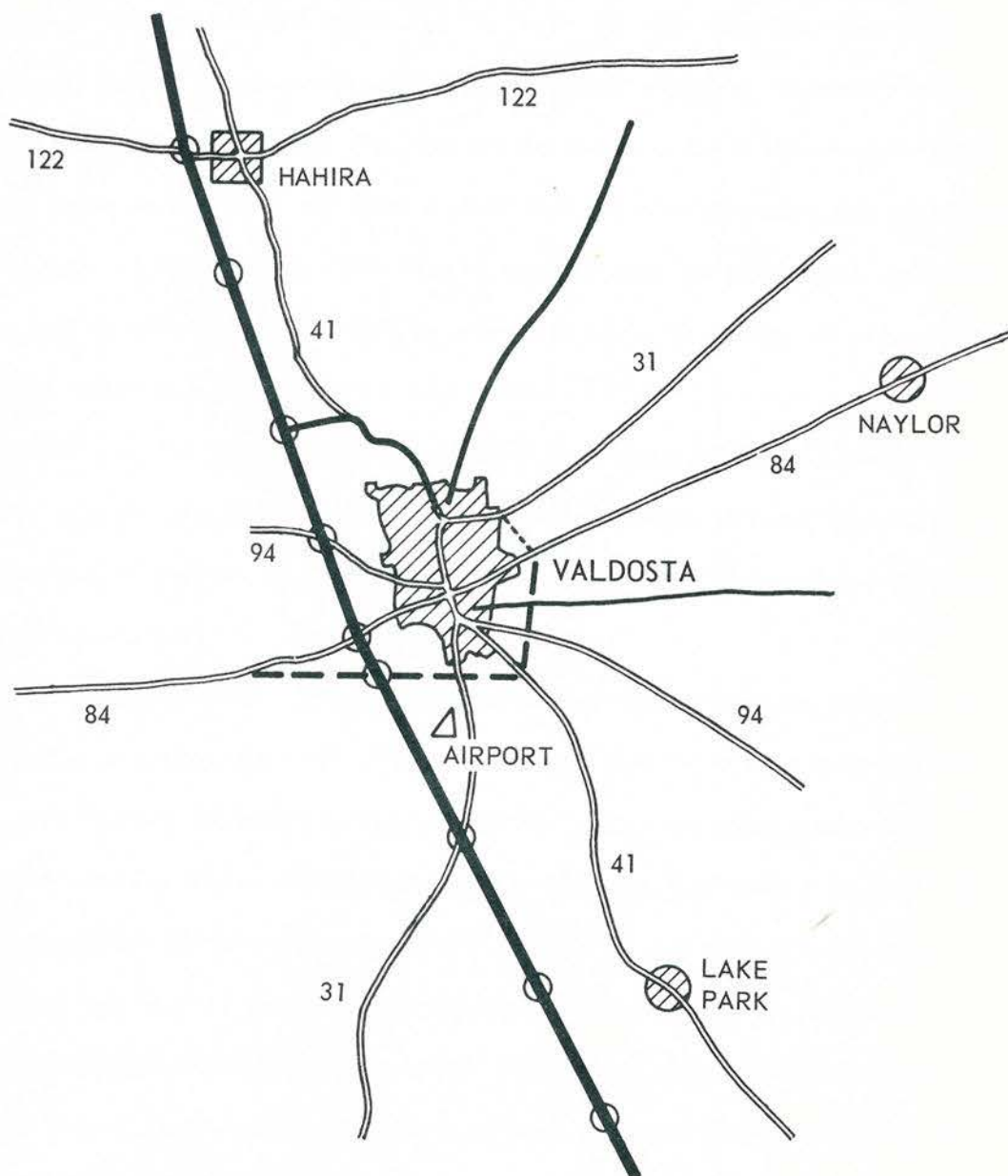


CHART 4
LOWNDES COUNTY HIGHWAY SYSTEM INCLUDING PROPOSED ADDITIONS



----- SUGGESTED COUNTY ROAD
———— PROPOSED INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
 ○ PROPOSED INTERCHANGE
 ----- PROPOSED STATE 84 BY-PASS

NEW PAVING:

———— 4-LANES
 ———— 2-LANES

find parking space in town they will shop. But what will the tourists do? If they come off the main highway at the wrong interchange they might quickly turn around and go back to the highway.

Even so, the money might not be lost to the county. Tourists on their way South might very well stop at Lake Park, or Hahira on the way North, after deciding not to stop at Valdosta. In either case, however, these towns would have to have modern motels and restaurants that are not there now. Lake Park has the basic make-up for an excellent recreation area and should not overlook the possibilities inherent in all the tourist traffic sure to pass right by the town.

Part of the highway program calls for Highway 84 to bypass Valdosta to the south. Tentatively, the bypass will leave the present road west of Highway 75, swing south around the city and rejoin Highway 84 east of the city limits.

In order to take the greatest advantage of this road system, a road should be constructed from the east end of the bypass at Highway 84 northwest to Highway 31 near the city limits. This would provide an effective circumferential route allowing traffic from any part of the city or county to go anywhere without the necessity of going through the center of town.

The peripheral route would also be advantageous to Hahira, allowing Hahira residents to commute quickly to work in any part of Valdosta. If Hahira moves into a community development program without delay, the town should grow as a city of homes for people working in or near Valdosta or even at Clyattville.

The bypass is not yet even in the advanced planning stage. Nevertheless, it should be possible to work closely with the highway planners so as to coordinate the building of the road between 84 and 31 North with the

bypass. This circumferential route in connection with the new limited access highway will be of the utmost importance to the future of Valdosta. The majority of the good available industrial sites with all services are in the east and south sections of the city. The addition of the one short stretch of road recommended will add tremendously to the attraction these sites will have for industry.

The proposed road system will also change the geography of the city. Both Highway 75 and the bypass will be limited access roads, but there will be enough interchanges to make industry and perhaps warehouses tend to group near the highway or the bypass. Eventually much of the area may have to be taken into the city. Zoning the peripheral areas now through a joint city-county commission will save many difficulties later. The area northwest of the city is likely to be very attractive for both homes and industry. It will not be necessary or even desirable to zone the entire county, but the areas just outside the city limits should be zoned.

Parking

Another problem requiring immediate attention is the parking in downtown Valdosta. Off-street parking would be the ideal solution. However, this requires not only parking lots, but lots in the right places. A city parking lot will not solve the problem because people are not likely to park several blocks from where they are going. For the same reason, turning part of the West Crane Urban Renewal section into a parking area would be of small value. For a long time it would remain partly empty.

In a very few years downtown traffic will be congested to the point where the entire width of the streets will be required to pass traffic. The interstate highway will crowd Hill Avenue to capacity. If the problem is left until that time, parking on the streets will be impossible. And unless action is taken soon there will be no facilities off the streets either.

Already, downtown parking is an important problem for Valdosta's merchants.

Parking is at least partly responsible for the loss of some out-of-town customers now. Valdosta residents could very well be next. The space now occupied by the city hall might furnish a partial solution.

Streets

The streets are bad. We will merely point them out as a serious liability and recommend that the city make improvements as quickly as possible. There are few towns where some of the paved streets are worse than the unpaved ones, as is presently the case in Valdosta. The city badly needs a street plan as well as subdivision regulations.

Zoning

The zoning regulations in effect at present have two big flaws. They are presumed to offer protection, but they actually protect neither the people living at the city limits nor industry. Present zoning permits anything to be built just beyond the city limits, even though the land is right next to the highest classification of residential areas. Therefore, the people at the edge of the city obtain no protection from zoning at all.

A start has been made toward city-county planning. High priority should be given to fringe area and highway zoning. The fringe zoning would afford protection for the people now living inside the city near its limits who do not now have the protection to which they are entitled. At the same time zoning would protect real estate values in the county. Furthermore, the peripheral zoning would serve to prevent the deterioration of those areas which will eventually be brought into the city limits. The highway zoning would also protect real estate values. It would serve the additional purpose of preventing deterioration of those highway approaches to the city which are still attractive.

Under the current regulations industrial land is not reserved for industrial use; it may actually be used for any purpose including industrial. On the other hand, industry is excluded from all except industrial zones. Actually, this practice is neither fair nor economical. If homes are built in an industrial area, the residents eventually can and in many communities have declared the industry a nuisance. They could--as has happened elsewhere--get the area rezoned or even force the plant to move. An area of mixed industry and homes then often ends up with the lowest land values of all classifications, because few people want to live near a plant and manufacturers do not like to establish a plant near homes.

The industrial zone should permit industrial uses only--and no other. If a manufacturer knows that houses will not be built beside his plant, the land is worth more to him. If there are no restrictions on building, the land is not very valuable to anyone.

Parks

Valdosta is particularly lacking in parks. Actually, there is probably enough land inside the city that could be made to fit the general conception of what parks should be. However, there would barely be enough.

The accepted criterion for park area is one acre for 100 persons. The large increase expected in population for Valdosta will in the not too distant future require 600 acres of parks to take care of the city's population alone. The new highway will be bringing a large number of tourists from the North, and a small park near the highway might tempt them to stop.

Not nearly enough suitable land is available for present needs, much less for a considerably larger population. In any event there would be little merit in planning for today only. One possible answer is a state park near Valdosta. Another possibility would be for the city to purchase land now outside the city limits. In any case, the city should have over

300 acres in parks now; each year the acreage requirements will rise and the price per acre will also climb.

One suggestion has been made that has considerable merit. Technically it is a park proposal, but actually it is a zoning proposal. The proposal, by Smith and Gillespie, is to utilize a strip along One Mile Branch as a buffer zone. Implementation of this suggestion would not alleviate the recreation problem but it would help beautify the city and prevent encroachment of the commercial and residential areas upon each other.

Municipal Administration

For far too long now the Valdosta city government has been run as a spare-time job. Getting someone to make it a full-time job is now at the top of the priority list. This change should bring an end to one of Valdosta's primary liabilities--deficit financing. Presumably, the city manager will bring with him a great deal of experience in dealing with many of the matters discussed in this report. But they are not only the concern of the city manager. He will need the assistance of all. And he cannot do the painting and cleaning up.

CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT

Although this major section might at first seem to be primarily focused on retailers, everybody is really included, since all of Lowndes County's citizens may be involved in selling the area. The banker who visits Chicago, for example, must "sell" Valdosta to an industrialist he confers with there. The hardware merchant might do the same thing on a fishing trip. This is just as much customer development as is a promotional program aimed at bringing more customers to Valdosta's retail stores. Moreover, the same ends are met, because a new factory would bring money to the business section just as much as attracting people from Madison County would.

A Shrinking Economy

It has been pointed out that Lowndes County's income is dropping and has been dropping for approximately two years. Nor is the decline all attributable to the recession. True, Valdosta's main industries are those which felt the pinch early. However, Lowndes County was due for a "private" depression all its own even without the added impetus given by the general recession.

Without the general recession this local setback might very well have been a fairly prosperous one--considerably below the area's peak but on a considerably higher economic level than even a few years before. As it is, the various depressing factors are reinforcing each other. The sum of the declines together is therefore considerably worse than they would be separately.

The major reasons for the area's shrinking economy are covered in some detail elsewhere. Here they will only be listed:

1. More efficient retail competition from other cities
2. Decrease in construction
3. Reduction in number of personnel at Moody Air Force Base
4. General recession

Of these, the closing of Moody Air Force Base will hurt most because of Moody's large payroll. The newspaper stories referred to the loss of a \$1,000,000 payroll per month. Not all of that money goes to Lowndes County businesses. Much goes to the post exchange and the commissary, and many personnel live outside Lowndes County. However, if even half the payroll reaches Lowndes County cash registers, the amount is almost as much as the county's entire manufacturing payroll.

However, half a million dollars would not measure all the effect of Moody's loss, since many other businesses would be affected and would probably find it necessary to lay off people.

Table 6 shows the changes in number of jobs by category in Lowndes County between 1950 and 1957. While agricultural jobs were decreasing by 1,524, nonagricultural jobs were increasing by 5,729. Approximately 3,700 of the added jobs were in government and manufacturing and were therefore not dependent on other local employment for their existence.

Another 2,000 jobs which were not in manufacturing or government were created during this same time, however. A substantial per cent of these 2,000 were generated because of the 3,700 manufacturing and government jobs, even though there were 1,500 less agricultural jobs. Moody's closing will cost Lowndes County a great deal more than just its share of the Air Base's payroll, unless this income is replaced with other payrolls.

In terms of manufacturing payrolls, between 1,500 and 2,500 workers will have to be added to absorb the loss of Moody alone. And as pointed out above,

TABLE 6
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF JOBS^{1/}
LOWNDES COUNTY
1950 - 1957

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
Total	9,321	13,526	4,205	
Agricultural	2,780	1,256		1,524
Nonagricultural	6,541	12,270	5,729	
Manufacturing	2,100	3,371	1,271	

^{1/}Excludes self employed, domestics and unpaid family workers.

Source: U. S. Census 1950; Georgia State Department of Labor;
Industrial Development Branch, Georgia Tech, Engineer-
ing Experiment Station

other losses are occurring. Other retail customers are also shopping elsewhere. The problem becomes one of making Valdosta a more salable product.

We do not know how many persons are involved. But Jacksonville and Atlanta definitely pull business from Valdosta. One reason given is better selections in the larger cities. This problem must be solved by the individual merchant, because there is perhaps not enough sales volume in Valdosta to warrant larger selections. However, people who go to Jacksonville for one item often buy others while they are there. Consequently, larger selections of one item in another city may take business away from all the merchants.

Another reason given is that people are not welcome in certain stores unless they buy something. Even if this is just an impression rather than a definite policy of some local stores, merchants are losing because of it.^{1/} On the other hand if such a policy is still operative in some of the stores, it is an extremely short-sighted one for a city of Valdosta's size. Many women like to shop without buying; their purchases are likely to be made later. Others, of course, do not know exactly what they want. But most of them will buy some day. Stores in the larger cities thrive on shoppers who do not buy every time they shop.

Valdosta has also lost customers who live outside of the city. They probably have the same reasons, plus others described elsewhere. There has probably been a much greater loss of out-of-town customers than of those who live in town.

^{1/} It is possible that this difficulty may have been remedied, since it has been several months since our interviews, and this is one of many subjects already discussed with some Valdostans.

The Big Game-Industry

There are three ways to recoup the losses--to secure new customers: (1) obtain new industry, (2) obtain more home-town customers, and (3) retrieve old resident customers.

Industrialists are the big game in customer development. Making a customer of one of them creates many additional customers--regular customers. Traditionally, this customer has been sold by the Chamber of Commerce.

Industrial development should not end however, with the Chamber of Commerce manager and an industrial development committee. It is everyone's job--a job with two aspects. One of these aspects is discussed in considerable detail under "Community Development." It refers to the job of making people want to patronize your establishment. In this case Valdosta and its surrounding area are the establishment.

The other aspect refers to the responsibility of everyone to be alert for industrial prospects. Salesmen, in addition to spending money in the county also bring news. They often can furnish leads about new plants: some of them might be aware of expansion plans for their own or other companies. And they are usually willing to talk. For example, a market analyst making a survey for a company whose name he was trying to keep secret found that salesmen had already spread far and wide the news that the company was planning a new plant.

Each person who comes in contact with traveling salesmen should ask the salesmen to inform him if he hears of any expansion plans. Purchasing agents are even more likely to be close to such sources of information and should likewise be considered good sources of leads.

Traveling people with headquarters in Valdosta should be frequently reminded to be on the alert for prospects. And they should be willing to act as ambassadors for Lowndes County. Businessmen, company owners and officers with business in the North, the East, or even in Atlanta should be willing to serve in the same capacity. For that matter, before going North, they might be able to obtain from the State Chamber of Commerce the names of prospects whom they might contact while in the northern city. There are advantages to having someone other than the manager of the Chamber of Commerce contact prospects, even though the city's businessmen may not know as much about the area as industrial prospects want to know.

The first requirement for a sound customer development program is a constructive community attitude. The same type of community attitude is required to bring in a shopper from Adel or an industrialist from New York. It can be inspired by local pride or a desire for money, or both. If inspired by both it will probably be more effective and obtain wider support.

The attitude must be manifest in a desire among the citizens for a better community and a growing community. Unfortunately these two objectives cannot both be accomplished without work. Most often a growing community expands without plan and as a result becomes a poor place in which to live. Often city services become overburdened and contraction results. Valdosta has grown in this manner and has therefore for several years been spending more than its income. It takes foresight and hard work to prevent these problems from arising. The same effort prevents land and property values from shrinking. The same work makes the city a better place to live. But achievement of these aims requires effective community planning.

Community attitude also creates the "business climate"--the atmosphere which makes it desirable for businesses to locate in the area. This

atmosphere is a mixture of active desire on the part of local people to obtain industry, plus an active community and industrial development program. "Customer development" is simply community and industrial development viewed from another angle. For best results, community planning is a must.

Community Betterment

Much time has been spent on the idea of community improvement, because most people would be inclined to think that the answer to Valdosta's declining economy would be added promotion. But there are two ways to increase sales. The second is to improve the product. Valdosta is the product, and Valdosta can and should be improved.

The subject is thoroughly covered in another major section, but since it is so much a part of customer development also, it needs to be reemphasized here.

Specific requirements in Lowndes County to support a promotional program would include:

1. off street parking,
2. "face lifting" much of the downtown area,
3. street improvement,
4. highway improvement,
5. slum clearance,
6. a community plan to anticipate and resolve problems before they become too costly.

All six items are really promotional devices, even though they are more subtle than the standard ones. How far Valdosta goes in pushing this six-point program will both determine and reflect the actual community attitude. When Valdosta and Lowndes County had a specific target, the paper

mill, they demonstrated an excellent community attitude. At that time a particular prospect generated the work. With a more farsighted systematic program the work should generate the prospects. The work would find prospects; the work would please prospects. This involves a difficult problem--that of maintaining this optimum attitude, this same enthusiasm, and rate of effort--even though the target is only a general one to be "fired" at, some time in the future.

The "better product," emphasized repeatedly, has various levels. In other sections we have described the need for a better county and a better city. We have even mentioned a better neighborhood. But better stores and even better sales training are to be included, since sales training in this sense is not the same as the sales promotion discussed elsewhere.

Questions to Answer

Perhaps one way merchants in Valdosta can help themselves would be to ask each other and themselves a series of questions which would apply equally well to evaluating the area, the city or an individual store.

Pertinent questions are: Which are the stores or vacation spots you patronize yourselves? Why do you go there? Is it good merchandise which attracts you? Good salesmanship? Something else? How did you find out about it?

It is worth noting that although advertising, reflected in the question, "How did you find out about it?" is an extremely important part of the entire program, the other questions properly precede it. In the end, however, you must tell people you have something to sell.

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion still holds its time-honored place in customer development. We recommend it highly, but we strongly recommend selling a better

product, especially if the competition has a superior product. Although Albany has had wide streets, adequate parking and slum clearance for years, Albany is still working at community improvement (See Valdosta Times, May 1, 1958). What is more, their efforts have secured results.

Once your product has been improved, you will have excellent additional promotional material. The improvement alone will be worth advertising. But there are many other approaches to sales promotion.

In order to decide what kind of promotion to use it is necessary to determine who are potential customers, and how to make them actual customers. Making this analysis will in many cases determine to what extent product improvement must accompany sales promotion. Improvement of Highway 41 is really the only thing that will increase the number of tourists appreciably, although even this improvement will not secure results unless the improvement is brought to their attention. By the same token, many retail customers might have been attracted to other towns because of their good highways. Improve the highway and they may return. Advertise without such improvement and they probably will not.

The customers who can probably be obtained are tourists, commercial travelers, residents of the general area who are now going elsewhere and industrialists. The last group mentioned is somewhat less directly in the customer category, but in the end the most valuable of all.

It is certain that some promotion directed to each of these groups should start immediately, without waiting for improvements to be completed, but the promotion cannot be expected to have maximum effect until the recommendations are carried out.

Organized activity by groups of merchants will have more effect than individual attempts, and for institutional advertising the cost can be spread

widely. However, advertising Valdosta does not sell individual products, and housewives also watch for sales of individual items. The opportunity exists here to use "loss leaders" in the sales promotion, with the entire merchant community supporting the loss. Advertising throughout nearby counties would be advisable, since one objective is to retrieve those customers near the fringes of the Valdosta market area who are not now buying in Valdosta.

More tourists can be brought to the city immediately if there is a satisfactory way to bring Valdosta to their attention. There is no "name" restaurant that is identified with Valdosta and with Valdosta alone. Still, Valdosta does have good food and lodging to offer. Tourist folders might be quite helpful if they can be put in the right hands. Tourist folders, like industrial brochures, are usually so plentiful that the recipient does not read any. Also, both folders and brochures reach many people heading in another direction. A limited highway sign program could do some good now and even start impressing the name on people's minds for that time when the new highway comes through. If Valdosta should enter into a highway sign program, sign maintenance should not be overlooked. Many signs on the Georgia highways now repel rather than attract.

Excellent meals and lodgings can make salesmen spend their nights in Valdosta even though their business may be elsewhere. There are even places so attractive to salesmen that they establish circuitous itineraries in order to be at a certain place for a meal. What sells these people however, is word-of-mouth advertising, not highway signs. Therefore, any such attraction could expect only a slow build-up among salesmen.

The local ban on mixed drinks will probably limit the number of conventions that can be brought to Valdosta, as well as limit to some extent the

number of salesmen who will be attracted. This prohibition is simply a limitation that Lowndes County must acknowledge and live with, because other counties in Georgia interpret the law differently.

This section has recommended a great deal of work for all the businessmen, but such effort is essential if the efforts of others are to bear fruit.

The Industrial Development Branch of the Georgia Tech Engineering Experiment Station will continue to furnish the Chamber of Commerce with feasibility studies as they are completed. Work will continue on the other phases outlined, but no one except the citizens can make a community more salable. And the larger the number of people working on industrial development, the more chances the Valdosta area has of getting good leads.

APPENDIX I

WHY AN INDUSTRY BYPASSED A TOWN

Robert Cassell, Editor

The complex subject of "why our town missed a plant" has been very impressively discussed in a recent editorial in the Shelbyville Times-Gazette. The article takes a realistic approach in analyzing the reasons for one company's decision to select a location in another Middle Tennessee town, after having given Shelbyville consideration for over a year. It is not common that a community can learn the reasons why a manufacturing firm passes it up for another location, and more uncommon for those reasons to be discussed publicly.

As pointed out in the article, the information was obtained from the owners and officials of the firm, the president of which had visited Shelbyville and, in turn, had as his guest the president of the local Chamber of Commerce. In addition, several trips were made to the town by other company officials. Among the reasons cited to Shelbyville for selection of another location were:

1. The approaches to Shelbyville were not considered attractive and inviting--the slums are more pronounced and noticeable than in the town chosen.
2. No sites were found ready for the start of construction in Shelbyville. Many involved questions on the availability of power, gas, streets and other necessary requirements for servicing the manufacturing operation. Costs of services were not definite.
3. The overflow of the river and "its apparent damage to the life and activity" of the local citizens and the probable effect on the valuation of property and tax structure were stressed.
4. Company officials were not too impressed with housing facilities and opportunities in Shelbyville. They felt there were not enough nice homes for sale or rent.
5. More recreation was available at the town chosen, such as a country club, boating and fishing opportunities.
6. Readiness of a bond issue: the company officials were told by representatives of the town chosen that the money was on hand, and available for immediate use.

It was also indicated by company spokesmen that when they looked into certain factors, they decided that the other town's high school was more modern, with better educational facilities, and that taxes were expected to continue to rise in Shelbyville and Bedford County.

The Shelbyville Times-Gazette concludes:

"We do not agree with the thinking, entirely, of those officials privileged to choose the town for locating this fine new Tennessee factory.

"However, it was not our privilege to select the town.

"The privilege was theirs . . . they looked over Shelbyville . . . then moved elsewhere!

"That's the cold fact."

"A business firm does not make a customer buy from it . . . but can only try to make the customer want to choose its merchandise.

"The choice belongs to the customer, and it is up to the merchant to convince the customer . . ."

"Thus, if those choosing locations for new industry do not like us as we are, it is up to us to find out and correct our shortcomings.

"Information received, frankly stated by those making the choice, is seldom available.

"Shelbyville has the privilege this time to carefully consider our failures.

"Its up to us to take corrective steps, if we really want new industry."

The attitude expressed in this editorial and the call for critical self-examination set a high standard for other towns. We have mentioned on numerous occasions that every town has its defects. Those communities that are aware of their shortcomings, that take action to correct them, and improve the local situation, in the last analysis are recognized as the most attractive. And in accomplishing these improvements, they naturally become the subject of intensive investigation by companies seeking new plant locations. If every town that thinks it missed an industry would follow the editorial advice above, the State of Tennessee could expect very substantial gains in its economic development.

Source: Tennessee Industrial Newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 12, April 1, 1958.